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AUTHOR Sultana, Michael
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ABSTRACT

A national seminar was held in Msida, Malta, for the purpose of disseminating results of the Council of Europe's Council for Cultural Cooperation's project on Innovation in Primary Education (IPE). Another aim was to discuss in depth the recommendations in the final report on the IPE project in the context of the Maltese system of education. A total of 67 heads of private and state primary schools in Malta attended. Participants were asked to briefly describe a curriculum innovation they had introduced into their schools and to rate the importance and difficulty of 12 issues related to innovation in school systems. Lectures at the seminar concerned: (1) sources of change and the need for innovation in the primary school; (2) resistance to change and variables related to the introduction of innovations to schools; (3) the traditional role of the head teacher and demands for innovation; (4) the contemporary role of the head teacher as an innovation agent; (5) curriculum development in the primary school; (6) assessment, appraisal, and record keeping; (7) parent participation; and (8) new technologies. Working groups discussed matters raised by lecturers during plenary sessions. The report provides summaries of opening speeches and lectures, and reports, conclusions, and recommendations of the working groups. (RH)

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"Innovation in primary education"

Dissemination of the project's findings

3rd National Seminar:
Malta - Msida, 9-13 May 1988

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Council for Cultural Co-operation
School Education Division

Strasbourg 1990

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The CDCC's Project No. 8
"Innovation in Primary Education"

DISSEMINATION OF THE PROJECT'S FINDINGS
3rd NATIONAL SEMINAR:

MALTA

Seminar organised by the Primary Sector
of the Department of Education

Msida, 9-13 May 1988

Report written by Mr Michael SULTANA

Assistant Director of Education
in charge of Primary and Special Schools

The points of view expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect those of the Council for Cultural Co-operation of the Council of Europe

COUNCIL FOR CULTURAL CO-OPERATION (CDCC)
School Education Division

Strasbourg 1989

1. BACKGROUND TO THE SEMINAR

A national seminar on the Dissemination of the Results of CDCC's Project No.8 "Innovation in Primary Education" was held at the University House, Msida, Malta between the 9-13 May 1988.

The seminar was organised by the Primary sector of the Department of Education, Malta, in conjunction with the Council for Cultural Co-operation (CDCC) of the Council of Europe.

This seminar is the result of recommendations put forward by members of Project Group No.8 at its 5th Meeting in Strasbourg advocating the organisation of seminars at National level and the letter of 3 August 1987 from Malta's member in the group Mr Michael Sultana who informed the Head of the School Education Division of the Council of Europe of Malta's intention of holding such a seminar.

The Director of the seminar and its General Rapporteur was Mr Michael C. Sultana, Assistant Director of Education-Primary Sector in Malta. The Council of Europe was represented by Ms Giulia Podestà, Head of the School Education Division, Directorate of Education, Culture and Sport, Council of Europe.

The guest speakers at the seminar were Dr Antonis PAPADOPOULOS, Director of Primary Education, Ministry of Education, Cyprus, and Mr Patrick LAVIN, Inspector, Curriculum Unit, Department of Education, Ireland.

The seminar consisted of:

i. Pre-seminar work;
ii. Lectures by guest speakers;
iii. Discussions in work groups;
iv. Plenary sessions.

Heads of Primary school both from the State and Private Sector were invited for this seminar.

2. THE AIMS AND PROGRAMME OF THE SEMINAR

The aims of the seminar were to:

i. disseminate the results of CDCC's Project No.8 on "Innovation in the Primary Education";

ii. discuss in depth the recommendations in the final Report in the context of the Maltese system of Education.

2.1 As pre-seminar work the participants were provided with a copy of "Main findings, conclusions and recommendations on CDCC Project No.8 "Innovation in Primary Education" submitted by Mr Michael C. Sultana as member of the Project & Planning Groups at the International Seminar on "Education & Training in Europe" (Frascati, Italy, October 1987) as well as the provisional edition of the Final Report on Project No.8 on "Innovation in Primary Education" (Doc. DECS/EGT (87) 23).

2.2 On a request by Dr Antonis PAPADOPOULOS two pre-seminar tasks were sent to all participants. A description of the two tasks as well as a synopsis of the results of the above two tasks appear in Appendices I and II.

2.3 Each of the guest speakers presented four lectures at the plenary sessions. These were as follows:

Dr Antonis PAPADOPOULOS:

i. Sources of Change and Need for Innovation in the Primary School.

ii. Resistance to Change and Variables related to the Introduction of Innovations to Schools.

iii. The Traditional Role of the Headteacher and Demands for Innovation.

iv. The Contemporary Role of the Headteacher as an Innovation Agent.

Mr Patrick LAVIN:

i. Curriculum Development in the Primary School.

ii. A New Look at School Assessment (Assessment, Appraisal and Record Keeping in the Primary Schools).

iii. Parent Participation in the Work of the Primary School.

iv. New Technologies and the Primary School.

2.4 Each of the talks was followed by group work. Participants were divided into four groups. Each group was made up of participants coming from different levels and types of primary schools and the participants were asked to choose a chairperson and a rapporteur. After each session the seminar met again in a plenary session and a short report was read by the rapporteur of each group.

3. OPENING OF SEMINAR

The seminar was officially opened on the 9 May 1988 in the morning by the Hon Minister of Education Dr Ugo Mifsud Bonnici LLD MP in the presence of the Director of Education, Mr Fredrick Fearne, Ms Giulia Podestà, Head of the School Education Division, Council of Europe, Mr Joseph Zammit Mangion, Deputy Director of Education, Mr Michael Sultana, Director and General Rapporteur of the Seminar; and other distinguished guests.

4. SUMMARIES OF OPENING SPEECHES

4.1 Mr Michael Sultana in an introductory speech, welcomed the distinguished guests and the Seminar participants. He said that the principal aim of Project No.8 "Innovation in Primary Education" was to bridge a gap in the education of children and adolescents, since the first School Project dealt with pre-primary education and the early development of children, while the second project entitled "Preparation for Life" concerned young people in the 14 to 19 age group.

The task of the project was to adopt a long-range approach to study the role, objectives, content and organisation of primary education in the member States.

Mr Sultana emphasized that Primary Education is of fundamental importance and that it should not be limited to the basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic, but that it must give all children the opportunity of acquiring and practising all the democratic values. Primary education must stimulate the development of knowledge, techniques and attitudes in learning which will shape their future reactions to the requirements of the secondary school, the world of work, the family and the community.

The course director said that he had approached Ms Giulia Podestà, to ask her help in organising a National Conference in Malta. Ms Podestà obliged and through her the Council for Cultural Co-operation of the Council of Europe accepted to give the help needed. For this Mr Sultana thanked Mr Patrick Lavin and Dr Antonis Papadopoulos who would be lecturing on the theme of the seminar. He concluded by saying that the seminar was the outcome of the work carried out by himself and the Education Officers responsible for Primary schools.

3.2 In his opening speech, the Hon Minister of Education, while welcoming guests and participants, said that for a long period of our cultural history the past had been idolised and idealised. The renaissance was a reference back with everything receiving a justification from some allusion to the old.

Slowly this cultural convention changed and human history began to build on a model of progression into a better future. The French Revolution brought with it a drive towards surpassing the past and emerging into the new, resulting in progress, development, evolution, reform and sometimes revolution in every field.

To-day we are in a position to look back and forward without falling into the trap of the unreal past or unrealistic future. But we still have to choose between change and conformity. This choice has to be the result of informed choice and reasoned out response.

Schools are tradition-orientated as they pass knowledge acquired in the past, but at the same time they are generating in students a sense of criticism, for reappraisal, for revaluation, for innovation resulting in change.

To effect change one has to study and explore, to experiment and verify the results, and then to change.

Referring to Project No.8, the Minister stated that this was not only a valuable contribution towards mapping out what is being perceived as mature for innovation now in the Primary sector but also fixing some constants in the everlasting attitude for innovation.

While reformers tend to look towards Universities for innovation the slover but surer changes are those that move up from Primary levels.

Change encounters resistance and so the strategy for change has to be well engineered to achieve a successful outcome.

Recent experience has shown that in our country we cannot afford change just to imitate other countries without considering the local situation. Neither could change be based on day to day responses which could result in frequent changes as a result of other experiences.

The Minister concluded by stating that the Government "believes that there are lines of innovation which are becoming urgent:-

1. Remedial measures should be taken as quickly as possible and not postponed to the later stages of primary or first years of secondary teaching.

2. That schooling be made more of a pleasurable experience so that truancy, and mental concentration be tackled positively.

3. That the curriculum be widened to include most life skills including the fundamental social skill of tolerance and democracy.

4. That greater use be made of modern methods and techniques of approach."

Innovation has to be made however against a background of order, discipline and the inculcation of self control. No true innovation can be achieved in chaos.

The Hon Minister concluded by wishing participants success in their endeavours and stating that he would be waiting for the results of their deliberations.

4.3 Replying to the Hon Minister's speech, Ms Giulia Podestà, while thanking him for his kind words, conveyed to the Maltese authorities the warmests thanks of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe for convening the Seminar and wished a successful week for the participants.

Referring to the debate on education held at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on the 4th May 1988, she said that most of the educational ideas strongly supported during the debate of the Assembly could be found in the conclusions of Project No.8.

While praising Mr Sultana for his contribution to Project No.8, she thanked Dr Papadopoulos and Mr Patrick Lavin for accepting the invitation of the Maltese Educational authorities to take part in the seminar.

Ms Podestà extended a warm welcome to the Education Officers and the Heads of School present and expressed the hope that a fruitful dialogue would take place; referring to the dynamic perspective in which curriculum was conceived in the Maltese school system, she underlined the importance of their role in fostering the harmonious development of curricula.

Referring to the provisional edition of the Final Report of Project No.8, she emphasized the importance of its recommendations stating that those people whose role is to define tomorrow's educational policy should have prior consultation and full

participation with all educational partners. It is not true that the school is cut off from society but it is undeniable that it is torn by contradictory demands and has to balance between tradition and innovation.

She stated that the report emphasized the need for policy makers to give top priority to education especially in budget and terms. All political forces should be committed to this, leaving aside petty quarrels. The aim should be to grant the best education to the child in the full respect of each individual's freedom of choice and beliefs.

5. SUMMARIES OF LECTURES

5.1 "Sources of Change and the Need for Innovation in the Primary School" by Antonis Papadopoulos

At no time in our history has there been so much continuous upheaval in our societies. To keep abreast with progressive developments - technological, social and educational - is an almost impossible task. To plan for the future and establish patterns of conduct in order to ensure effective quality education is a herculean task to be taken in hand with vigour, determination and optimism. Today's world calls for constant innovation ventures. Survival depends on keeping abreast of latest developments.

As far as the Primary School is concerned, internal and external pressures impinge heavily on the establishment. Moral outlooks, demographic changes, employment trends, new family structures, international relations, multicultural society, technological advancements, influence of the media, are but a sample of external pressures that schools must acknowledge and adapt to. Internal pressures would include new knowledge about child development, new staff relations, curriculum updating, students' aspirations, teaching resources, evaluation and assessment techniques.

After referring to various definitions of "innovation" in educational literature, Dr Papadopoulos elaborated on "innovation" as conceived by Project No.8 and described the different styles of innovation as recorded in the Project's Final Report. He observed that any innovation, however worthwhile and beneficial, will meet with resistance. Change raises a threat to one's security. For any innovation to be successful account has to be taken of its aim, diffusion techniques, consultation, periodical evaluation. Innovation should be a process, not an event.

5.2 "Curriculum Development in the Primary School" by Patrick Lavin

The lecturer spoke on Curriculum development as expounded by Project No.8 touching on quality, differentiation, continuity and organisation as salient educational features. Establishing the modern aims of Primary Education, he outlined the role of the Primary School today making allowance of child's age, stage of development, environment, experience and background.

Equality of access to education does not mean equality of opportunity for self-fulfilment and success, and therefore the primary school, he emphasized, must seek its role to foster each pupil's success in the enhancement and development of abilities. This necessitates differentiated teaching, which involves differentiation of subject matter, of learning objectives, of teaching methods, and chronological differentiation.

Mr Lavin propounded on the didactic contract for optimum development which indulge on the effectiveness of teaching methods, as advocated by the Behaviourist or Traditionalist approach; he then dwelt on the Progressive, Constructivist approach associated with Rousseau, Dewey and Piaget; and finally turned to the Interactive Theory.

The lecturer then commented on Chronobiology which regulated thinking and learning implicated by facets of alertness, attention and concentration which contribute to success at school stimulating the desire for continuous learning. The modern approach emphasizes social and relational interactions and depicts schools as "work organisation units of knowledge", and learning as a successful exercise in communication. The newer approach, he opined, views the child as a "skilled", professional worker who works better if he has a say in his own working conditions and in his type of production.

Mr Lavin analysed the ever increasing range of curricular demands confronting the role of the primary school as a result of society's growing expectations; concluding on the possibilities of a broader development in many subject areas simultaneously in the building up of the prevalent curriculum.

5.3 "A New Look at School Assessment (Assessment, Appraisal and Record Keeping in the Primary School)", Patrick Lavin

Traditional assessment measured a child's performance in relation to a prescribed norm. The modern dynamic approach recognises that appraisal of the pupil's work together with other feedback may provide support for the learning process. This is formative assessment, in which the learning conditions are optimum because the pupil is aware of the objectives being pursued and is regularly informed of his progress.

The curriculum may be assessed by looking at pupils' results and teaching methods assessed by comparing these results. In 1970 the introduction of "responsive" assessment took more account of the real functioning of schools, of parents' opinions, and of the relationship between the objectives laid down in the school system and that system's socio-economic context.

According to Prof. Jean Cardinet, assessment is the essential stage in management. It involves investigating what is actually happening (observation), comparing it with the objectives (assessment proper) and finally taking corrective measures (remedial action). He identifies three types of assessment: external, internal and negotiated. Negotiated assessment implies a synthesis between external and internal assessment and between the two antithetical conceptions of management (centralised and decentralised) which they represent. Management of the school system requires an initial effort to

understand the position of all the parties, to identify with others in a way that makes their individual viewpoints seem justified and to go on to subsequent negotiation to bring the various perceptions into convergence and ultimately to generate a common behaviour pattern.

As to class management, in negotiated assessment the pupils learn to assess themselves under the guidance of the teacher who first tells them what the objectives are, what criteria are relevant and what indicators can be used to determine whether or not performance is satisfactory. Having internalised the assessment standard the pupil then draws up his own learning plan, on which his successive work contracts with the teacher are based.

As regards school management, headteachers judge a proposed innovation not merely on its educational merits, but with reference to all their concerns. This means that change is acceptable only if each of its drawbacks is offset for everyone by some advantage.

As to system management, it is by confronting their individual demands, while remaining determined to advance together, that the parties involved in innovation must assess the present situation and manage its reform. Sometimes it is possible to allow the central authority, on the one hand, to retain its galvanising and facilitating function while, on the other hand, allowing local adjustments to be negotiated. Local schools retain a large measure of autonomy. National seminars provide an opportunity for face-to-face discussion and the reaching of negotiated conclusions.

School records should be easy to keep, easy to use, relevant and timely, offer a comprehensive account of progress, in precise language and in a form that is acceptable to all partners, be non-prejudicial to the child and non-restricting to the teacher.

5.4 "Resistance to Change and Variables related to the Introduction of Innovations to Schools" by Antonis Papadopoulos

Notwithstanding the many innovative efforts during the past thirty years or so, little or no change has been registered in the schools' functioning and organisation. Why is this so?

A major cause of this failure is that efforts have been concentrated on methods, not on people (teachers). All approaches to innovation should be concentrated on those who will eventually implement the innovation. "Unless teachers alter their patterns of teaching and gain satisfaction and meaning from so doing, then it is unlikely that the innovation will be very successful." (Hopkins 1986). Every change is bound to encounter resistance from the teachers.

As Carmichael (1982) puts it, "Human beings change from the inside, not from the outside". Attitude change is required on the part of those involved in an innovation, and attitude changes occur over time. The desire on behalf of the individual to change depends mainly on the degree of motivation he has and the strength of the incentives present at the proper time, e.g. drives for status and prestige, the need to identify with certain groups, the need for success, winning social acceptance, the desire to contribute to progress, etc.

Johnson (1970) points out that visiting a successful programme and observing it in action is the most persuasive way to change somebody's behaviour. Elaborate help should also be provided to teachers after they begin to engage in innovation. Project No.8's conclusions endorse these findings, adding the following elements which the teachers need in order to change and implement innovation:

1. Colleagues on the same side of the struggle.
2. Friends.
3. Success.
4. Support.
5. Freedom and limitations.
6. Open communication of all concerned: central authority, those responsible for local educational policy and administration, those responsible for school management, teachers, parents and even pupils.

Teachers, like all other people, resist change for various reasons. Innovation is a risky business. That is why it needs support. Career prospects, power and prestige are all threatened.

In addition to fears, other factors, such as indifference, negativism, lack of interest, apathy, inertia, logical conservatism, previous obligations, all influence in a negative way innovative efforts.

To lessen resistance, teachers should be brought on the inside of these changes, and be consulted and directly involved in them.

After analysing variables related to innovation, as identified by different authors (such as Fullan, Dean and Miles), Dr Papadopoulos dwelt on assumptions and conditions conducive to successful change.

Among long and varied lists of assumptions quoted from various authors, Loucks' and Pratt's (1979) short and comprehensive list emphasizes the importance of the individual in the innovation process:

1. Change is a process, not an event.
2. Change is accomplished by individuals, not institutions.
3. Change is a highly personal experience.
4. Change entails developmental growth in both feelings about and skills in using new programmes.

The involvement of the headteachers and the teachers, parents and pupils is emphasized as a required condition for the acceptance of change. Innovation impositions are certainly not recommended. Innovation implies commitment, faith, and co-operation among teachers, as well as an understanding and creative leadership.

Teachers in the "Contact Schools" also recommend that there should be administrative support from school inspectors and headteachers together with adequate resources to provide books and materials, and teachers should have the opportunity of meeting often to discuss issues. Parents should also be introduced to the innovations.

Teachers resisted change when "ordered" to change.

5.5 "Parent Participation in the Work of the Primary School" by Patrick Lavin

The lecturer started by stating that relations between parents and teachers are very delicate. These relations have been a bone of content for a long time. In the thirties it was believed that parents and teachers were natural enemies, an opinion which was held for a long time. Nowadays the idea is to harness all the resources possible for the good of the child and one of these resources are the parents, who must be educated to help us teach their children. Parents must be invited regularly to play their role, not just when we reach a crisis.

We should invite the parents for the children's sake as teacher/parent good relations help children get better results.

Of course parents have to be educated in order to be able to work side by side with the teacher while they are given a clearly defined role.

Parents must be educated to give the right skills to their children before they start school, and how to create a positive attitude and confidence in their children. This will help the child in the school as well as in life.

School/parents Co-operation

Once a Headteacher accepts that parents have a role to play in the school, he must initiate discussions with the parents in order that the roles of each side are clearly defined. This would lead to better understanding on both sides.

It is a good idea to have one person to co-ordinate relations with persons who could also help parents to form Parents' Associations.

Parents/Teachers meetings are important so long as all parents are invited to discuss general issues. The success of such meetings depends on the informal relations that have been previously built up with parents.

Other ways of co-operating is by individual contact, written communication and home visits. Of course certain skills are needed for these contacts to be successful.

In our dealings with parents we must always stick to the principle that we have the skills and parents do not, so we have to help them to have a role to help us educate their children.

We should meet parents to help us to plan school activities and functions, to perform certain functions and even to help them understand the curriculum and their relationship with the school, and to top their resources.

Mr Lavin concluded his lecture stating that: "In dealing with parents the teacher must keep the principle of how we can help parents to help us help their children without interfering with our right as professional people who manage our own affairs in the way it seems right to us to effect."

5.6 "The Traditional Role of the Headteacher and Demands for Innovation" by Antonis Papadopoulos

The lecturer dwelt on the complexity of the task of the headteacher and the development of his role as protracted through various theories, approaches, models or styles. In his presentation of the traditional models, viz. the bureaucratic model, the scientific-management approach, the human relations movement, the synthesis of these three models, the competency-based model and the management by objectives model, he listed the various difficulties encountered and elicited the good aspects in each case quoting identifications from a number of theorists such as Weber, Massie, Fayol, Barnard, Gatzels and Guba and experiments carried out by Western Electric: the latter had resulted into the human relations approach.

He outlined the key responsibilities and competencies according to Mc Intyre's list (competency-based model), assessing and evaluating the characteristics of the principal in his task to reach his goals and objectives, making very valuable observations on the effect that traditional models had in school practices and procedures, creating competition instead of co-operation and antagonism instead of collaboration.

Examining the traditional models philosophy under the light of the wisdom of the Chinese philosopher, Lao Tzu, he pinpointed situations where the high expectation from the leader and the authority vested in him, leads to pushing people, manipulation, coercion, and frequent intervention. He also touched on egocentricity conflicts and imposition which are the results of centralisation, bureaucratisation and closed climate, harping on collective spirit with the leader being more of a facilitator than a pusher, he himself providing opportunities and avoiding constraints and limitations.

In his conclusion he emphasized the innovation agent in the contemporary headteacher's role from the past "I did it" to today's "we did it", from closeness to openness, from centralisation to decentralisation, from isolation to communication, collaboration and co-operation.

5.7 "New Technologies and the Primary School" by Patrick Lavin

The lecturer dwelt on the pressures that the spread of the new information and communication technologies, on one hand, and the demographic and economic changes that effect the function of the family, on the other hand, exert on education. Though these burdens may somewhat lower the morale among teachers, they present quite a challenge to the problem of the transmission and acquisition of knowledge and to the role of school in seeking to develop an active approach as opposed to the passive acquisition of information which may be encouraged by the media.

He brought to light the distinction between the "network culture" of the schools and the "mosaic culture" of the media and the resulting difficulties encumbent on schools, upsetting the relationship of rivalry and partnership.

Mr Lavin, then, went on to evaluate the effects of the Media on children, those of technology on the Curriculum and Educational Research, and consequently the place of the computer and relative software in the classroom. Teachers have to integrate technology into appropriate pedagogical processes and didactic criteria, as stressed on several occasions both at national and international level (see, within the framework of Project No.8, case study on "The use of micro-computers in Primary Schools of the City of Leeds" and the findings of the Symposium on "The New Technologies and the Primary School" (Lyngby)).

Notwithstanding the many difficulties such progress engenders, amongst which the cost of investment in training and development and the added pressure on national economies, modern technology may help considerably in the promotion of equality of opportunity for self-development and success from culturally and socially disadvantaged backgrounds enhancing the aims of primary education in modern society.

5.8 "The Contemporary Role of the Headteacher as an Innovation Agent" by Antonis Papadopoulos

The lecturer dwelt on the importance of the headteacher's role in influencing the adoption and implementation of innovation.

To fulfill this role the headteacher should not only know how innovation is diffused but also how teachers change. Then he will be expected, of course, to employ certain concrete strategies and methods in order to be effective. Dr Papadopoulos then mentioned the three kinds of strategies as outlined by Chin and his associates (1969) (power-coercive; empirical-rational; normative-re-educative) and elaborated various typologies of effective headteachers as identified in educational literature.

To ensure a smooth introduction to innovation, a headteacher should know every staff member very well in order to be able to help him and to be able to make the maximum use of the teacher's potential. He should also be aware of the characteristics of innovators. Dr Papadopoulos then referred to David Johnson's study on the characteristics of innovators and quoted his comprehensive list of characteristics of the individuals who initiate and advocate change. Headteachers who feel that they do not have such characteristics, should not, however, withdraw from any attempt to deal with innovation.

Dr Papadopoulos then dwelt on some of the conclusions of a seminar on the same topic which he had directed in Donaueschingen (Federal Republic of Germany) in June 1986*. In implementing innovations in primary schools headteachers should not lose sight of the basic aim of schooling, which is the uninterrupted process of development of each individual child, attuned to his/her abilities. They should also examine all perspectives through which an innovation is viewed to ensure a smooth development of the implementation of the said innovation. Headteachers should pay attention to in-service training both before and during the implementation phase of an innovation.

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* Seminar held under the CDCC's Teacher Bursaries Scheme: "The Role of the Headteacher in Innovation in Primary School", 23-28 June 1986: Report DECS/EGT (86) 72. See also page 34, Appendix II, hereafter.

In concluding his lecture Dr Papadopoulos reminded his audience that headteachers are expected to lead the way in the implementation of innovations in primary schools. They are supposed to know the variables involved in the innovation process and deal with them successfully.

6. REPORTS OF THE WORKING GROUPS

The groups were organised beforehand in a way so that each group was made up of a broad spectrum of all levels of schools - lower and upper primary, state and private, male and female. On the other hand each group was asked to appoint a chairperson and a rapporteur by mutual consent.

The groups were instructed to discuss matters raised by the lecturers during the plenary sessions. In most cases the lecturers themselves provided the themes to be discussed.

After each groupwork meeting the rapporteur of each group presented a short report of the proceedings, followed by questions from the floor.

A synopsis of the deliberations and recommendations of each group follows:

6.1 Working Group A

Chairperson: Mr Anton Agius Muscat

Rapporteur : Miss Gemma Cachia
Mr Victor Fenech

1. The first obstacle identified was an inadequacy in communication between the head and the teachers, resulting from various conditions such as an overload of work on the part of the headteacher as a result of too much paper work, and the lack of proper clerical help such that the head has to deal with petty chores. Such items as filling in and sending of children's transfers, filling in of registers, selling of badges, depositing money in the Bank etc. are time consuming and do not allow the head time for innovations.

2. Our schools are not equipped with gadgets such as intercoms etc., and this does not facilitate communication. Also, in some schools the layout of the school itself creates difficulties.

3. Too many bureaucratic procedures.

4. Teachers and heads are very often attached to old, known habits which give them a sense of security. They seem to have a fear of the new, and the unknown in trying out new ideas.

5. Our education system is too examination-oriented and this excludes the chance of innovation.

6. Where student-teachers in the school are concerned, there seems to exist a lack of liaison between the Faculty and the Department of Education. This also does not facilitate matters.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Heads of primary schools should have clerical help, in a way that the clerk provides continuity within the schools.

2. Where the school is not so big to merit a clerk of its own, arrangements should be made for clerksharing between neighbouring schools.

3. Schools should have a good communication system, to enable heads to communicate better with teachers when the need arises.

4. The Department should introduce one afternoon session per month in which the children leave early, allowing time for well-organised staff meetings in which heads and staff can study past performance and plan for the future.

6.2 Assessment, Appraisal and Record Keeping in Primary Schools

1. It was generally agreed that assessment involves criteria. However objectivity comes into assessment, since different teachers give different interpretation to any code used.

2. Children are assessed from the first day they enter school. All schools use some form of assessment though this may differ from primary to secondary and from state to private schools.

3. In state schools during the first three years assessment is informal: from Year III onwards assessment is formal, i.e. through examinations. In one private school, testing starts from the first year, in others the teacher is asked to give a written statement of a child's attitude to work, towards adults, companions, etc.

4. Formative assessment must be done in a way that helps the child to grow as a person and it includes control, motivation, initiative, responsibility, etc.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Self-assessment involves a mechanism by which children assess themselves academically.

2. There should be a system of continuous assessment by the class teacher to relieve the child of all undue pressure of final examinations.

3. In the case of examinations, class average is a better way of child assessment than place in class.

6.3 Main problems encountered during the adoption and implementation phases.

1. It was felt that in Malta's case the word 'innovation' generally means changes laid down by the authorities. The central control imposed by our system does not allow much room for real innovation by heads and teachers themselves. This does not mean that heads and teachers have no latitude or space in carrying out their tasks.

2. The specific innovation chosen for discussion was this year's change in the Reading/Oral exam (15 marks), taking it from the headteacher's domain to a written paper previously reserved to Year VI. It has now been extended to Years IV and V, and possibly, next year, to Year III when formal exams actually start. The Department has thus transferred the mark from the subjective to the objective area, even if it still expects headteachers to hold the oral reading so that "heads retain some measure of pupil contact".

3. There were members in the group who opined that the Department should not measure the head's contact solely in terms of these annual exams. These members feel that once again the change has been imposed without prior consultation, thus making the said change not a "process" but an "event".

4. Another objection is that if the Department's aim was to have more objective and precise marking, then it should have extended the scheme straightaway to Year III where objectivity is most crucial, since it is the first step in streaming.

5. On its side the Department argued that the range of vocabulary in Year III is not extensive enough to allow for a written paper.

6. A compromise is possible by retaining the oral reading on the basis of assessment (a, b, c, d, e) which is not to count towards classification; but others queried the wisdom of a headteacher having to go through this task when the mark does not count for classification purposes. Alternatively this oral assessment could be done by selected teachers - not necessarily the class teacher - allowing the head to concentrate on more pressing problems at the time.

7. Finally the group feels that the enlargement of the number of subjects to five, including Religion and Social Studies, should have a positive effect on the Junior Lyceum entrance examination. However one has to wait and see, and to study the eventual outcome.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. For the successful implementation of any innovation, it was felt that headteachers and, through them, staff, should be involved in the drawing up stage.

2. Innovation cannot be imposed. Indeed no innovation can hope to succeed unless with the conviction of the teachers who ultimately have to implement it, nor can any innovation take place where teachers are demoralised through bad working conditions.

3. Reading comprehension should cover all classes from Year III to Year VI. However the children should still be assessed in oral reading and the spoken language, though not necessarily by the head of school.

4. Heads of schools and staff should be able to meet regularly to discuss problems and innovations, and one afternoon session of non-pupil contact per month could be devoted to this end.

6.4 Inservice courses for heads of schools

1. Every one agreed about the need for these inservice courses, particularly those heads who after a long time in the secondary schools found themselves being appointed heads in the primary section, and there was one member whose experience was in the opposite direction.

2. It was suggested that for the sake of flexibility such personnel should be allowed to gather previous experience in the sector in which she/he has been appointed head, thus exposing her/him to a rather different setup and style of administration to which she/he had been exposed for long years.

3. The group agreed that ideally the head should have had professional experience and be conversant with new ideas and approaches. Not so long ago heads used to be sent abroad for one year's professional training prior to their appointment. In order to break our insularity the group proposes that such a scheme be again studied and perhaps put into operation. The all-important thing here is that overseas courses are carefully chosen for their content, since the methods being studied must be modern, sound and practical.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. All heads should be carefully groomed for their role and they should always be chosen on educational, not political, grounds.

2. Some heads have been in their role for ages and may have grown a bit "rusty" - hence the need for inservice courses of renewal.

3. There should be periodic meetings for all heads in which mutual difficulties are discussed and practical remedies suggested, and in which even the legal aspects of headship are clearly explained and evaluated.

4. More use should be made of the facilities available at the University Faculty of Education by heads and teaching personnel.

6.5 The notion of quality and the basics

1. Differentiated teaching means that in the primary schools curriculum there is room for both quality and the basics. They are not only not antagonistic; they in fact should complement each other, since the objective of a school is both to develop skills and to develop personality.

2. Quality proved rather difficult to define. In a way one could talk of quality in content, in method and in approach. For instance, what content should we teach? What method, apart from the old chalk and talk, are we using? Are the children ready for it? Quality is really a tripod of teacher, learner and the subject being taught.

3. The basics were easier to define. They were deemed to be the rudiments of a subject and of normal civilised behaviour (e.g. tolerance, mutual understanding, moral values, etc). The 3 R's are important, but then so is health, peace, the environment and the root culture of the country itself.

4. Curriculum in our primary schools leaves much to be desired, with a dearth in the cultural subjects and much cramming in the 3 R's in the final years (Years V & VI). Also, is the primary school preparing the children adequately for the next step, namely entry into the secondary schools where a rather different climate awaits them?

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The problem of continuity (kindergarten-primary-secondary) should be amply studied so that a child can proceed smoothly and without undue stress.

2. The language problem should be settled once and for all. Which should be taught first, Maltese or English? Definitely the language of instruction should be the child's own native tongue, but then there is a dearth of good Maltese textbooks and reference books.

3. Time has come for a rethinking of the old free distribution of textbooks in the schools. A two-tier scheme should be introduced, thus enabling the children to own their own books and build up their own libraries.

4. There is a dire need for curriculum reinforcing programmes by the Education Media Centre.

6.6 Sources of change and need for innovation

1. Innovation is change and change is life itself. However sound innovation in our educational system has not been very forthcoming. For instance, changes which society itself deemed necessary were not always met by the teachers themselves, who in turn felt that their own ideas of innovation have been thwarted by various factors, not least by bureaucratic measures.

2. Generally parents' idea of education is limited to an obsession with examination results and GCE passes. On the other hand educators have to go beyond this limit and establish education as it should really be: an all-round preparation for life.

3. Unfortunately the only innovation parents seem to want these days is one that makes even more for a choice elite, hence the attendant ills of cramming and private tuition. This is due to the acute pressure for academic success leading to University places and the better jobs. This rat race is symptomatic of parents' acute fear of unemployment for their children.

4. Schools cannot make innovations in a vacuum; changes have to be embedded within the social needs of the nation. The group identified some specific areas needing innovation due to changing patterns in our society, such as the creation of a pluralistic society; the increase in the number of working mothers, making more demands on the school; and the psychology of the child himself.

5. To some very young children the school may seem intimidating. These have to be helped at this crucial stage. For instance, kindergarten children need special treatment: a separate identity and sometimes even a separate, more congenial atmosphere.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Parents should be made aware that education and academic success are not necessarily one and the same thing. Education should be viewed in a different perspective and not as a passport to suitable employment. Otherwise the concept of education is reduced to a type of arena in which the main protagonists are parents' expectations vs child's real personality.

2. In the case of kindergarten groups it was felt that a centre of their own is recommended in many cases.

3. The whole setup of early school (kindergarten to Year VI) should in fact be rethought and restructured, possibly thus: early education to consist of kindergarten groups and infant classes; primary education to consist of Years III to VI.

4. The group feels that government has enough resources and man power to upgrade the validity of primary education as the basis of lifelong education.

6.7 Outlining a policy on school/home relationships

1. Good relations between parents and teachers are important for a good school, and any school will work better if such a relationship exists. However the situation in Malta is rather precarious owing to certain unfortunate events in the very recent past. The group feels that the event in question has left a rift which has not yet healed.

2. However all members of the group feel that in today's society the school should open its doors for parents, so that parents and teachers may have mutual understanding.

3. What is the role heads envisage for parents? Should they deal with them as individuals or as an organised body, i.e. Parents' Associations? Even so, members of the group maintain that the role of the existing PA's should be redefined since these PA's - which also include non-parents and volunteers, something which the group objected to - have rather emerged as watchdogs on heads and teachers alike.

4. The general opinion was that these should be substituted by PTA's. However it was here pointed out that parents in the old PTA's did not have much say in the running of the schools and that they were operating in the shadow of the head of school.

5. Finally it was pointed out that parents' days, newsletters for parents and meetings for parents on a fairly regular basis would help to promote a better relationship between teachers and parents, while it must not be forgotten that in the state schools, particularly at primary level, parents are such frequent visitors that everyday is practically an open day.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Parents-Teachers Associations are generally preferred to Parents Associations, as this leads to closer collaboration between the two parties central to the child.

2. Though parents have a right to be informed about the school, their actual participation should be within certain parameters and within precise limits. Such associations should also cater for the education of the parents themselves. A workable situation already exists in the private schools where parent-teachers relationships function effectively, particularly as these usually operate as Parents-Teachers Associations.

3. A policy formulating body should be set up to regulate the function of both PA's and PTA's which are not mutually exclusive. Nor are these associations to be used solely for fund-raising activities and social meetings. Their real function is to see that the children's education is on the best possible footing and to devise ways and means to promote greater harmony within the school.

6.8 Working Group B

Chairperson: Miss Georgina Cachia

Rapporteur : Miss Carmen Agius

The goals of education are very often determined by the policy makers, but it does the system a lot of good when headteachers combine their efforts and in sharing their experiences and discussing the difficulties they encounter in their daily work, they can specify clearly what their aims and goals should really be. Over the past years, we have experienced diametrically opposite situations; from the exam-free unstreamed system to the exam-regulated streamed system we have today. Both have their advantages and disadvantages but it is up to us now to find the happy medium.

Our primary education is regulated by exams. Our syllabus is based on the needs of the exams. Though they are a necessary evil, exams need not be the centre of our education system. To avoid this, more importance should be given to teachers' assessments. In Year VI, pupils needn't be subjected to two separate exams; the entrance into Lyceums and the annual. The latter, perhaps corrected otherwise, could serve both purposes.

The assessment of pupils should reflect better the personal attainment of the children rather than their academic achievement. Our objectives should be:-

1. To help the child; so far, assessment has been recorded more for the benefit and guidance of teachers.

2. Positive; not only negative qualities should be entered.

The latest innovation discussed by this group was the elimination of exams at the end of Year II with the consequent result of the removal of streaming in Year.

3. The majority of this group found this system rather beneficial because:-

a. The exam-tension in Year II was diminished and there was a happier and more care-free atmosphere in the lower classes.

b. Teachers themselves felt more relaxed and could devote more time to cultural subjects, sports and craft.

c. Behaviourwise there was also a marked improvement, because usually slow learners happen to be also the trouble makers and with the system of streaming, very often all these pupils found themselves in the same group and teachers could make no headway with them. Now, such pupils would be split into different classes and so they were more controllable.

d. When tests/exams are given to 5- or 6-year olds, we feel we are being very unfair in that we are actually testing the parents' ability to guide and push their children or not; in fact, had the lower achievers had the same amount of pushing at home, they would have done just as well if not better than the best achievers in their class. As it is now, by the time children are submitted to the first formal exam at the end of Year III, they have been under the influence of teachers for at least 3 years and so this result is fairer because it gives a better chance to the brighter pupils who have to fend on their own.

e. Extra-curricular activities, which render schooling pleasant and memorable found a better place in the school system.

f. Some teachers were dissatisfied with this innovation as with mixed abilities in their class, they couldn't record the marked progress which they would have recorded had they been teaching a homogeneous group. Some felt that slow learners hindered quick advancement. Parents too, especially those of the brighter children, disagreed with this system of non-streaming.

Parents are definitely more conscious of their children's education now-a-days and they feel they should be involved. When innovations are being introduced, the mass media should play a very important part in educating the parents themselves by holding debates, forums, and by giving lectures by professionals, so that the new policies are explained to them and matters are discussed in detail before an innovation is made.

During the discussion on the traditional role of a headteacher and the difficulties encountered when introducing innovations, the members of the group mentioned the following obstacles:-

a. A large load of clerical work.

b. The onus of seeing to the maintenance of the school.

c. The lack of power the heads have in introducing innovations.

d. The lack of involvement in the posting and transferring of teaching and industrial staff to and from their school.

e. The lack of time available to discuss matters with their staff.

When discussing the kind of training needed by headteachers to perform their work efficiently, it was felt that the previous system of sending prospective heads to train abroad before their appointment was a more desirable preparation for the headship of a school. To make up for the lack of such courses, it was suggested, that newly appointed assistant heads should always be posted with an experienced head before they are given a school to run on their own, and heads transferred from one section to the other should be given a short period of observation with another experienced head.

Secondly there's a need for a special education library well-equipped with the latest editions of education literature and kept up to date with education magazines which heads could easily consult.

Guidelines on the Code of Procedure should be given to all heads serving at present and to every new head on his/her appointment.

Interactive learning lays the emphasis on activity rather than on written work; it stimulates the development of problem solving strategies by children. It is believed that our methods of teaching are totally different from this because:-

1. We tend to stress the written work more.

2. Parents, especially those of children in the lower classes of primary school, expect their children to write a lot and judge their children's teachers as good or bad according to the amount of homework they give them.

3. We do not have enough peripatetic teachers to teach special subjects such as music, art, PE, and drama and so class teachers tend to stress the academic side of the child's education unduly.

Dealing with school/home relationships, the majority of the group agreed that the existing Parents' Associations are not desirable. One would prefer Parent/Teacher Associations. And even so, parents have to be educated to take up such roles, because very often, they give the impression that they (a) either join such associations to be watchdogs over teachers or (b) that they would expect their children to have preferential treatment just because they are members.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Our system lays more emphasis on the academic achievement of the more talented pupils to the detriment of their own cultural and over-all education, and also to the disadvantage of the less gifted pupils.

2. Headteachers do not have enough freedom to introduce innovations because (a) the system is too centralised (b) they have to cope with too much paperwork (c) a lot of their time and energy is wasted on the maintenance of the school and (d) they have no say in the choice of either their teaching or their minor staff.

3. As matters are, heads are inadequately trained. Some, especially those who have been transferred from one section of the department to the other, just play it by the ear. Heads feel they need information in the form of literature, observation and guidelines on the code of procedures.

4. Interactive learning makes learning more enjoyable and more effective, but the initiative must come from the policy makers. There must also be supportive staff.

5. Assessment and record-keeping should aim at encouraging the child to be a better person, and not to make him believe that he's good for nothing.

6. Ideally parent/teachers' associations should be formed and by means of the mass media, parents should have their role in such associations explained to them.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. More importance to be given to teachers' assessments to replace or supplement exams.

2. Exams are a necessary evil and should be retained but not before Year III.

3. Early identification of pupils' needs and the supply of supportive staff once these needs are identified.

4. No transfers of teaching staff during the scholastic year, and great care in the choice of minor staff posted in the schools.

5. An afternoon session once a month should be left free for staff meetings. This should be a regular day established formally by head office.

6. Heads should be properly trained before being given the posting, as was done in previous years.

7. No newly appointed assistant heads should be given the responsibility of administering a school if he/she has not spent a year or two assisting an experienced head.

8. More peripatetic teachers for the cultural subjects.

9. Parents' Associations should be abolished. After proper preparation, parent-teachers' associations may be introduced with the head having the final say in the running of the school.

10. Informative and educative programmes on T.V. and radio to familiarise parents with innovations.

6.9 Working Group C

Chairperson: Sister J. Azzopardi, Bro. Mario Zammit

Rapporteur : Emm. J. Ellul

1. All the members of the group were of the opinion that parents and society do block any innovative process. Most parents are so anxious for their children to succeed in examinations that they are putting pressures on Heads and teachers to gear all their efforts towards the attainment of academic excellence. Without realising the harm they are doing, they take a lot of the head's time with their complaints on trivial matters.

2. The local education authorities have not encouraged any form of innovation - to the extent that heads have been brainwashed into awaiting instructions rather than taking their own decisions. Changes have been introduced unilaterally without any consultation and, even when a major policy decision has been implemented, heads were never asked for their opinion.

3. It is good to note that in recent months heads' suggestions are being considered and implemented, but the head's position still remains uncertain.

4. Every school has its identity and its characteristics, but hardly any latitude is allowed to the head to use his discretion.

5. Heads complain that they are not trusted. At times they feel treated like children bent on playing truant. They still do not have any say in the choice, movement or transfer of their staff. Theirs is a glorified clerk's job with all the paperwork which regularly fills the in-trays on their desks.

6. Heads have to face an acute shortage of staff as qualified teachers are not available. They are devoting most of their time in showing the ropes to casual personnel, in helping them to improve their teaching methods, and in acting as masters of discipline when students simply refuse to obey this inexperienced staff.

7. With all these burdens on his shoulders and with all the restrictions he has to face, the head's job has become routinish and mostly unfulfilling. Such a state of mind does not lead to innovation.

8. On school/home relationships we all agreed that Parents' Associations, as presently constituted, should be abolished. There has been more than enough interference from political busybodies who have tried to run the schools on their own terms.

9. The group agreed with the concept of differentiated teaching given the diverse aptitudes and abilities of children.

10. We are all for continuous assessment provided that the teachers are to do this conscientiously and scientifically.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Continuous and meaningful consultation between heads and education authorities should be a top priority in any exercise to better schools.

2. From time to time heads are to be kept abreast of modern trends in education.

3. Before a head is posted to a school, he is to be "apprenticed" to an experienced head.

4. A list of well-trained and experienced assistant heads is to be drawn up - ready to take over whenever a vacancy of a head occurs.

5. Resumption of courses abroad should be given due consideration.

6. Each head is to be given a specified sum of money to meet current expenses.

7. Classrooms have become drab places in which to stay. Thus, the provision of a television set and a video recorder in every school has become a necessity.

8. One afternoon per term should be devoted to staff meetings, with the children being sent home at mid-day.

9. PTA's in preference to PA's should be re-established.

10. A formal education programme for parents should be introduced immediately.

11. Performance Rating Reports are mainly intended for the general service, so we suggest a form which is more appropriate to the duties of a teacher.

12. The number of collections for various good causes should be drastically reduced.

13. Smaller classes are to be formed - we repeat that 30 children in a class are too much to handle.

14. We are all for continuous assessment instead of national examinations.

15. A teacher, specialised in remedial work, should be appointed for every school.

16. Prize-giving should be modified in substance, possibly awarding certificates of merit in preference to placings.

6.10 Working Group D

Chairperson: Mr Eric Gatt

Rapporteur : Mr Leslie S. Agius

1. The group agreed that the points raised by Dr Papadopoulos with regard to sources affecting change (and as identified by Project No.8) are relevant to the situation existing in Malta, the notable exception being the ethnic situation. Malta is, as a rule, more homogeneous than most European countries.

The group discussed the parents' attitudes to change which in the opinion of the group is an adverse factor to innovation in primary education. Parents are too much in favour of instruction, wanting proficiency in the three Rs as early as the kindergarten years. They want teachers to give too much homework, even at an early age. This explains also the craze for private lessons sometimes at a ridiculously early age. Parents judge teachers as being good or bad by their unprofessional standards. It is the group's opinion that parents are made aware as to the real aims of an educational system. Heads and teachers can help by explaining, whenever possible, the true aims of education. The group thinks that the head's and the teacher's effort can be greatly augmented by help from the communication media.

The group also discussed teachers as sources of change. The discussion was very brief and only one point was made. This concerned teachers in the lower classes of the primary school. It was thought fit to underline the importance of good teachers in the early years of the primary school (Years I and II). The idea prevailing was that teachers graduating B.Ed (Hons) seem to think, as a rule, that they are inferior to their colleagues if they teach these lower classes. Teachers teaching at this level should be made aware of their important and delicate role.

2. As to problems encountered during the adoption and implementation phase of innovation, the group pointed out that our educational system is centralised and therefore heads of school have little power to affect radical changes in their particular school. However, they can collectively influence the Education Department to implement changes they think relevant.

Other problems which hinder change were listed as follows:

a. Parents - too much emphasis on instruction.

b. Teachers - for reasons of overwork, insecurity and professional pride.

c. Bureaucracy - certain services meant to support the school are not efficient.

d. A logistic problem - lack of space, not enough furniture, not enough or outdated equipment.

3. The group listed some traditional elements in the head's role which present certain difficulties to the good management of the school. The following are by no means the only ones, but the ones we had time to discuss:

a. Problem of centralisation as discussed in para 2 came to the fore once again. There exists a lack of latitude in which a head can work to adjust certain norms to the situation as it exists in his/her school.

b. There is not enough initial administrative and professional training and in-service courses. We thought that the holding of the seminar, "Innovation in the Primary School", was a step in the right direction, since by such activities a dialogue can be established and new ideas brought to light.

4. When we discussed the curriculum and the reneval of the current content, we singled out the incompatibility between a centralised educational system based on a common curriculum and a national examination and changes in it by individual heads within a school situation.

As regards curriculum content in School A, it was felt to be just a little overloaded but that problems of School A in this respect would be solved if all formal examinations were to be shifted to School B, which means that streaming would start after Year IV.

As far as School B is concerned, we thought that the curriculum is rather overloaded in certain examinable subjects and therefore does not allow the full treatment of other non-examinable subjects.

5. On record-keeping we agreed on the need of a good system of record-keeping to have a clear picture of the child the sole purpose of which is to help the child develop all his capabilities.

Our Cumulative Record Card system is too comprehensive and it covers too many years in a child's life (5 to 16) besides judging him or her always on the same criteria. There are things in it which are relevant in a School A situation but not in a School B setting and vice-versa. Sometimes they are not relevant at all because they are more useful in the ambient of a secondary school.

Instructions on filling the cards, where available, are not too lucid.

Heads of private schools have a different record card for each year. This system has the advantage of discarding or retaining information on the child.

The group felt that the C.R.C. should serve as a jacket in which there is relevant family and medical background. Inserts for each year or a number of years can then filled and retained within the jacket. In this way teachers and heads can make a more realistic assessment.

The head needs help to free himself/herself from routine clerical duties so that he/she can concentrate more on educational and pastoral work such as the more conscientious filling of C.R.C.

6. As regards parent participation in the work of the primary school, the group raised the following points:-

a. The points brought forward by Mr P. Lavin are in their majority relevant to the Malta situation. However, our social structure does not permit the implementation of certain suggestions.

b. Teachers should have a positive attitude towards parents because this is the basis of success of school-parent contact.

c. Parent/Teachers Associations are preferable to Parents Associations. Whatever kind of association is formed, this should be made up of parents whose children actually attend the school.

d. Such associations should exist solely for the benefit of the children and should not be involved in the adminitration of the school.

e. The head of school should not be held responsible for decisions taken by such associations if, in the head's expressed opinion, such decisions are not in the best interest of the school.

7. We did not have time to discuss Mr P. Lavin's "New Technologies and the Primary School". But there was general consensus that the new technology can make teaching more interesting and upgrade traditional teaching aids. Dissatisfaction on the present system of school broadcasts was expressed. The visual factor has to be introduced in our primary schools. The schools have to compete with more entertaining media already found in many homes - T.V., videos and video games.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Parents must be made avare of the real aims of education so that a better balance between instruction and education is established.

2. Parent Teachers Associations are preferable to Parents Associations.

3. Heads could do with professional in-service training, locally or abroad.

4. Teacher training should keep well in mind the lower classes of the primary school. It seems that at present, good infant teachers are hard to come by.

5. There is a case for some decentralization in our educational system.

6. The school's dependance on auxillary services must be reduced or else these services are oiled to be made to work more efficiently.

7. Heads need clerical help to free themselves from routine clerical duties, to concentrate more on educational and pastoral work and give more thought to innovation.

8. The granting of one non-contact afternoon per month is needed so that Heads and teachers can discuss school problems; children can have the afternoon off.

9. The curriculum needs some adjustment in content and balance.

10. The necessary studies should be carried out to see if streaming could begin a year later so that eventually there will be no formal examinations in School A, that is, in Years I, II et III.

11. Record keeping (C.R.C.) needs to be looked into with a view of making it more realistic and more comprehensible.

12. The School Broadcasting System is outdated and needs to be upgraded technically. The introduction of T.V. and videos as modern teaching aids is urgently needed.

7. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The main recommendations of the four working groups were the following:

1. The introduction of at least one afternoon session per month in which children are sent home earlier than usual, allowing time for staff meeting to discuss problems and innovations and for staff development.

2. The introduction of a system of continuous assessment by the class teacher to relieve the child from the undue pressure of final examinations. Streaming should be based on class average rather than place in class.

3. Heads and staff should be involved at the drawing up stage of innovations, while conviction rather than imposition should be the rule when innovations are implemented.

4. Both pre-service and inservice courses are important for Head of Schools, with periodic meetings for all heads of schools to discuss and suggest remedies for any difficulties they come across.

5. Heads should be appointed on education and not political grounds.

6. More use should be made of the facilities available at the Faculty of Education (by heads and teaching personnel).

7. The problem of continuity should be amply studied so that children can proceed from one school level to another.

8. The language of instruction should be the child's own native tongue but the question of whether Maltese or English is to be taught first should be settled.

9. There is a dire need for curriculum reinforcing programmes by the Education Media Centre.

10. Parents should be made aware that education and academic success are not necessarily one and the same thing. Education should be viewed in a different perspective rather than as a passport to suitable employment.

11. A formal education programme for parents should be introduced.

12. Primary education could be restructured into Early Primary: (Kindergarten and infant classes) Primary (Years III to VI).

13. Parent/Teachers Associations are preferred to Parent Associations as the former lead to closer collaboration between the two sides.

14. Parameters for parents' participation should be clearly set while the associations themselves should be encouraged to cater for educating the parents.

15. The real function of PTA's should be to promote greater harmony within the school and help in promoting the children's education.

16. Appraisal of staff should be put on a better footing and the present Performance Rating Reports reformed.

17. The number of collections for various good causes should be drastically reduced.

18. A teacher specialised in remedial work should be posted to every school.

19. Studies should be carried out to see if streaming could begin a year later (Year IV) so that there would be no formal examinations in School A.

20. Early identifications of pupils' needs and the supply of supportive staff once these needs are identified.

21. Informative and educative programmes on TV and radio to familiarise parents with innovation.

A P P E N D I X I

PRIMARY SECTOR
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
BELTISSEBH

25th April, 1988

NATIONAL SEMINAR ON "INNOVATION IN PRIMARY EDUCATION"

Dear Participant,

Enclosed please find two short questionnaires drawn up by Dr Antonis Papadopoulos in connection with his forthcoming lectures in the above-mentioned Seminar.

You are requested to fill both questionnaires and return them to the undersigned not later than Monday, May 2nd, 1988.

M C SULTANA

E.O. II i/c Primary Schools

Encs

PRE-SEMINAR TASKS

TASK N°1: PRESENTATION OF A CASE STUDY

Consider an innovation you have introduced either in the school you currently direct or in one of the schools you directed in the recent past. Describe briefly (3 to 4 pages) this innovaation, aiming at highlighting the following:

a. The context of the innovation (type of school, student and teacher population, community, etc).

b. The innovation itself, the way it was introduced, and the roles exercised by the individuals in the system.

c. Main problems encountered during the adoption and implementation phases.

d. Major outcomes of the innovation.

e. Major observations with respect to initiating and implementing changes in primary schools.

Please prepare two copies of your case study. One of the two copies should be mailed to the Organiser of the Seminar not later than 2 May. Also, make sure that you have the second copy with you during the Seminar and be ready to share your thoughts with the rest of the participants.

FOLLOW-UP TO PRE-SEMINAR TASKS

TASK N°1: PRESENTATION OF A CASE STUDY

1. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

The Seminar participants were requested by Dr Papadopoulos to describe briefly an innovation they had introduced either recently or in the recent past. In all, 43 such responses were received by the Organiser of the Seminar.

Fev of the innovations described by the Heads were really curriculum innovations, and those which fall under this category are either coming from private school Heads or were implemented by the Heads and not initiated by them due to the fact that changes in the curriculum of state schools are generally initiated by the Department of Education because of our centralised system.

Actually one Head states "In our highly centralised system, it is very difficult to introduce an innovation which would effect pupils, staff and parents in a permanent way".

However one could trace throughout the ansvers received that the innovations which really succeeded were those where the Head concerned:

1. Introduced the innovation after consulting the staff or at least called meetings with the teachers as soon as he decided to initiate or implement the innovation. "I would involve teachers at the very first stages of the decision taking so that they would feel that it is coming from them and not being imposed upon them" states one Head. "Once the co-operation of the staff is gained, the project would be successful". Another Head however, while admitting that discussion and persuasion proved worthwhile stated "in case a new innovation is being started, I would present it in a more forceful way as some teachers are hesitant in moving away from a set routine and might try to get around change".

2. Obtained the co-operation of parents, Heads met parents and discussed the change with them; "I would surely secure community support" emphasises one Head. A Head who failed to consult parents states that she would do so in future innovations "not so much for their approval but to make them understand the importance of the innovation for their children".

3. Used pre- and in-service training.

4. Supported staff in their endeavours.

5. Helped staff understand the need and rationale of the innovation.

The major problems encountered by Heads when adopting and implementing an innovation were the following:

1. Insufficient resources, both human and material.

2. Too much time wasted to convince staff, and in some cases parents, to accept the change.

3. Fear on the part of some teachers who looked on change as a threat to their security.

4. Lack of technical and professional help.

5. Difficulty in reaching consensus among all interested parties.

After experiencing the implementation of an innovation some Heads, while stating that they would repeat most of the actions they took in future innovations, said that they would avoid others, such as:

1. Being unduly dejected by resistance on the part of those who were disturbed by the change.

2. Taking hasty decisions.

3. Lack of communication.

4. Being rigid.

5. Launching an innovation late in the scholastic year.

6. Starting innovations with the minority of the staff, instead of informing the whole staff and then letting those who come forward carry on with the project.

7. Introduce too many innovations in the first months of taking over a new school.

APPENDIX II

TASK N°2:
PARTICIPANT OPINION ON THE MAJOR PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED BY HEADTEACHERS WHEN INTRODUCING INNOVATIONS IN THEIR SCHOOLS

Below, there is a list of twelve issues relative to introducing innovations in school systems. You are asked to rate these issues twice by circling the number in the appropriate column.

A. In general, how important do you consider each issue for the successful implementation of an innovation?

B. In general, how difficult is it for the headteacher to handle the issue?

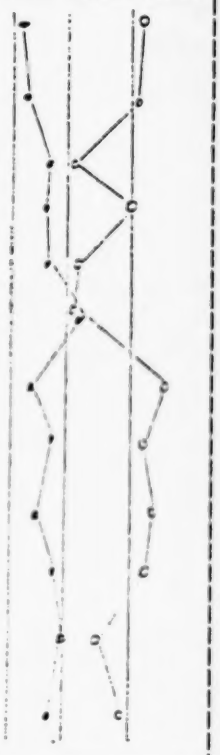
A. IMPORTANCE					B. DIFFICULTY			
Very important	Important	Fairly important	Not important	QUESTION	Very difficult	Difficult	Fairly difficult	Not difficult
4	3	2	1	a. Having a clear understanding of the proposed change.	4	3	2	1
4	3	2	1	b. Securing the participation of staff members during the adoption and implementation phases.	4	3	2	1
4	3	2	1	c. Providing initial and continued inservice training.	4	3	2	1
4	3	2	1	d. Developing an implementation plan.	4	3	2	1
4	3	2	1	e. Securing adequate materials.	4	3	2	1
4	3	2	1	f. Securing technical support during the implementation phase.	4	3	2	1
4	3	2	1	g. Maintaining an orderly and secure school climate.	4	3	2	1
4	3	2	1	h. Providing feedback during the implementation phase.	4	3	2	1
4	3	2	1	i. Promoting communication among staff members.	4	3	2	1
4	3	2	1	j. Monitoring performance during the implementation phase.	4	3	2	1
4	3	2	1	k. Securing community involvement and support.	4	3	2	1
4	3	2	1	l. Establishing and maintaining a guiding value system for staff members.	4	3	2	1

ISSUES RELATED TO INTRODUCING INNOVATIONS

RATE OF IMPORTANCE/DIFFICULTY IN THE PARTICIPANTS' OPINION

SYNOPTIC TABLE

ISSUES	A. IMPORTANCE		B. DIFFICULTY		PROFILE
		Rank Order		Rank Order	4 3 2 1
a. Having a clear understanding of the proposed change.	3,91	1	1,73	8	
b. Securing the participation of staff members during the adoption and implementation phases.	3,76	2	1,93	7	
c. Providing initial and continued in-service training	3,27	7	2,97	1	
d. Developing an implementation plan.	3,32	5	2,00	6	
e. Securing adequate materials.	3,30	6	2,91	2	
f. Securing technical support during the implementation phase.	2,82	12	2,91	2 ex aequo	
g. Maintaining an orderly and secure school climate.	3,61	3	1,44	12	
h. Providing feedback during the implementation phase.	3,22	9	1,72	9	
i. Promoting communication among staff members.	3,48	4	1,61	11	
j. Monitoring performance during the implementation phase.	3,10	10	1,70	10	
k. Securing community involvement and support.	3,00	11	2,52	4	
l. Establishing and maintaining a guiding value system for staff members.	3,23	8	2,06	5	



._____. Importance score
o_____o Difficulty score

ISSUES RELATED TO INTRODUCING INNOVATIONS

RATE OF IMPORTANCE/DIFFICULTY IN THE PARTICIPANTS' OPINION

SYNOPTIC TABLE *

ISSUES	A. IMPORTANCE		B. DIFFICULTY		PROFILE
		Rank Order		Rank Order	
a. Having a clear understanding of proposed change.	3,91 4,00	1 1	1,73 1,89	8 9	
b. Securing the participation of staff members during the adoption and implementation phases.	3,76 3,79	2 2	1,93 2,58	7 3	
c. Providing initial and continued in-service training.	3,27 3,37	7 7	2,97 2,63	1 2	
d. Developing an implementation plan.	3,32 3,58	5 4	2,00 1,79	6 12	
e. Securing adequate materials.	3,30 3,26	6 9	2,91 2,22	2 e.ae 6	
f. Securing technical support during the implementation phase.	2,82 2,74	12 12	2,91 2,21	2 e.ae 7	
g. Maintaining an orderly and secure school climate.	3,61 3,47	3 6	1,44 2,10	12 8	
h. Providing feedback during the implementation phase.	3,22 3,48	9 5	1,72 1,84	9 10	
i. Promoting communication among staff members.	3,48 3,68	4 3	1,61 1,83	11 11	
j. Monitoring performance during the implementation phase.	3,10 3,32	10 8	1,70 2,26	10 5	
k. Securing community involvement and support.	3,00 2,79	11 11	2,52 2,53	4 4	
l. Establishing and maintaining a guiding value system for staff members.	3,23 3,21	8 10	2,06 2,68	5 1	

Importance score
Difficulty score

Importance score
Difficulty score

* Underlined figures and bold lines in the Profile refer to the Seminar held in Donaueschingen (F.R.G.) in June 1986 (see Section 5.8 in this report, penultimate paragraph); this Seminar gathered participants from the following countries:

Belgium, Cyprus, Finland, Federal Republic of Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Malta, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom.

A P P E N D I X III

PROGRAMME

Monday 9 May 1988

09h00 - 09h30 Opening address by the Hon. Dr Ugo Mifsud Bonnici, LL.D., M.P., Minister of Education
Address by Ms Giulia Podestà, Head of the School Education Division, Council of Europe

09h30 - 10h00 Coffee Break

10h00 - 11h00 Plenary Session
Talk on "Sources of Change and Need for Innovation in the Primary School"
by Dr. Antonis Papadopoulos

11h00 - 12h15 Group Work

14h00 - 15h15 Plenary Session
Talk on "Curriculum Development in the Primary School"
by Mr Patrick Lavin

15h15 - 16h00 Group Work

Tuesday 10 May 1988

09h00 - 10h30 Plenary Session
Talk on "A New Look to School Assessment (Assessment, Appraisal and Record Keeping in the Primary School)"
by Mr Patrick Lavin

10h30 - 11h00 Coffee Break

11h00 - 12h15 Group Work

12h15 - 14h00 Break for Lunch

14h00 - 15h15 Plenary Session
Talk on "Resistance to Change and Variables related to the Introduction of Innovations to Schools"
by Dr. A. Papadopoulos

15h15 - 16h00 Group Work

Wednesday 11 May 1988

For the representatives of Council of Europe's Council Cultural Co-operation: Visit to Mosta; Mellieha Elementary Schools; Gozo

Thursday 12 May 1988

09h00 - 10h30	Plenary Session Talk on "Parent participation in the work of the Primary School" by Mr Patrick Lavin
10h30 - 11h00	Coffee Break
11h00 - 12h15	Group Work
12h15 - 14h00	Break for Lunch
14h00 - 15h15	Plenary Session Talk on "The Traditional Role of the Headteacher and Demands for Innovation" by Dr A. Papadopoulos
15h15 - 16h00	Group Work

Friday 13 May 1988

09h00 - 10h30	Plenary Session Talk on "New Technologies and the Primary School" by Mr Patrick Lavin
10h30 - 11h00	Coffee Break
12h15 - 14h00	Break for Lunch
14h00 - 15h15	Plenary Session Talk on "The Contemporary Role of the Headteacher as an Innovation Agent" by Dr A. Papadopoulos
15h15 - 16h00	Group Work
19h30 - 20h30	Reception

A P P E N D I X IV

EVALUATION DU SEMINAIRE

Dear Participant,

In order to help us in the planning of future seminars, ve would be grateful if you could complete this questionnaire. Please be as frank as possible in your comments.

A. CONTENT/METHODS

1. The pre-seminar tasks were: (tick one).

Of no value	Of some value	Of considerable value	Of great value	Of exceptional value
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2. Did the actual benefits from the Seminar meet your expectations? (tick one)

Not at all	Partly	Yes	Very much	Completely
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3. Did the content of the Seminar meet your needs? (Please tick one box only).

Not at all	Partly	Yes	Very much	Completely
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

4. Please rate the following aspects of the Seminar and add any comments you may wish to make:

Poor	Satisfactory	Good
☐	☐	☐

a. Overall planning

Comments

_____

_____

_____

General atmosphere

Poor ☐ Satisfactory ☐ Good ☐

Comments

_____

_____

_____

b. General quality of inputs

Poor ☐ Satisfactory ☐ Good ☐

Comments

_____

_____

_____

. Discussions

Poor ☐ Satisfactory ☐ Good ☐

Comments

_____

_____

_____

. Documents

Poor ☐ Satisfactory ☐ Good ☐

Comments

_____

_____

_____

B. MISCELLANEOUS

1. Are there any further comments you would like to add about this Seminar?

2. Do you have any suggestions to make for improving the quality of similar seminars in the future?

Thank you for completing the questionnaire.

M.C. SULTANA
ORGANISER OF THE SEMINAR

SYNTHESIS OF REPLIES

1. The pre-seminar tasks were: (tick one)

Of no value	Of some value	Of considerable value	Of great value	Of exceptional value
☐	☐ 34,55	☐ 45,45	☐ 20	☐

2. Did the actual benefits from the Seminar meet your exepctions? (tick one)

Not at all	Partly	Yes	Very much	Completely
☐	☐ 12,73	☐ 67,27	☐ 14,55	☐ 5,45

3. Did the content of the Seminar meet your needs? (Please tick one box only)

Not at all	Partly	Yes	Very much	Completely
☐	☐ 35,19	☐ 44,44	☐ 18,52	☐ 1,85

4. Please rate the following aspects of the Seminar and add any comments you may wish to make:

a. Overall planning

Poor	Satisfactory	Good
☐	☐ 21,82	☐ 78,18

General atmosphere

Poor	Satisfactory	Good
☐	☐ 14,54	☐ 85,46

b. General <u>quality</u> of inputs

Poor	Satisfactory	Good
☐	☐ 51,85	☐ 48,15

. Discussions

Poor	Satisfactory	Good
3,64	43,64	52,72

. Documents

Poor	Satisfactory	Good
1,82	49,09	49,09

APPENDIX V

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS/LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS

Abdilla Rev. Joseph
Abela Vincent J.
Agius Alfred C.
Agius Carmen
Agius Leslie
Agius Muscat Anthony
Aquilina Paul
Attard Emmanuel P.
Attard Lucy E.
Azzopardi Joseph
Baldacchino Josephine
Borg Carmen
Bugeja Anthony N.
Busuttil Rose
Buttigieg Josette
Cachia Gemma
Cachia Georgina
Camilleri Carmen
Camilleri Sr. Cleophe
Camilleri Helen J.
Camilleri Michael
Cini Anthony
Coleiro Tonna Therese
Darmanin Emanuel
Debono Carmelina
Debono Charles
Debono Emanuel
Debono Josephine
Ellul Carmen
Ellul Doris
Ellul Emanuel
Fenech Victor
Frendo Josephine
Galea Lina
Gatt Eric
Gauci Tarcisio
Grech George S.
King Michael A.
Mercieca Hugh
Micallef Evelyn
Mifsud Mary Rose
Pace Dr Iris
Pace Louisette
Pace Michael
Portelli Jane
Puli Mary
Said Anton V.
Saliba David A.
Spiteri Lora
Sultana Natalina
Valletta Albert
Vella Croce
Vella Gemma
Vella Marjorie
Xuereb Carmen
Zammit Joseph
Zerafa Joseph
Bro Edward
Bro Mario Zammit
Sr M.A. Refalo
Sr Mary Mizzi
Sr Anne
Sr Pauline Curmi
Sr Edmondina
Sr Josephine Azzopardi
Mr Richard Bonello
Sr Miriam